

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P R 280914Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3136
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7596

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT KS JA US
SUBJ: POSSIBLE ROK-JAPANESE SUMMIT MEETING

1. PRESIDENT PARK AND PM FUKUDA SEEM TO BE MOVING CAUTIOUSLY CLOSER TO A SUMMIT MEETING, POSSIBLY EARLY NEXT YEAR, ALTHOUGH RECOGNITION OF POLITICAL OBSTACLES, PARTICULARLY ON THE JAPANESE SIDE, DICTATES A SLOW APPROACH BY BOTH PARTIES. PUBLIC SPECULATION AND ROKG PRIVATE COMMENTS TO US UNIFORMLY LINK THE ISSUE TO A US/ROK SUMMIT MEETING.

2. REPORTEDLY PRESIDENT PARK RAISED THE SUGGESTION, DURING A JULY 16 MEETING WITH PM FUKUDA'S PERSONAL EMISSARY ESAKI MASUMI, OF A PERSONAL MEETING BETWEEN HIMSELF AND FUKUDA. ESAKI HAD COME BEARING A LETTER FOR PARK FROM FUKUDA, WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE MENTION OF A BINATIONAL SUMMIT, AND HE REPLIED NONCOMMITTALLY WHEN PARK RAISED THE SUBJECT. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE KOREAN NATIONAL TV NETWORK, HOWEVER, BROADCAST NATIONWIDE IN KOREA AUGUST 16, FUKUDA REMARKED THAT IT WAS "UNNATURAL" THAT THE TWO NEIGHBORING LEADERS SHOULD NOT GET TOGETHER OCCASIONALLY, AND ON AUGUST 24 FUKUDA
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RECEIVED VIA ROK AMBASSADOR KIM YONG-SON A PERSONAL LETTER FROM PARK WHICH HAPTONG AND KYODO WIRE SERVICES SAY DEALT WITH THE QUESTION OF A SUMMIT MEETING.

3. BOTH ROK MOFA AND JAPANESE EMBASSY SAY THEY "HAVE NO FIRM PLANS" REGARDING A MEETING, AND HAVE NOT BEEN IN TOUCH ON THE SUBJECT. JAPANESE EMBASSY CONTROL

OFFICER FOR SEPTEMBER 3-4 JAPAN-KOREA FOREIGN
MINISTERS' MEETING INFORMS US THAT THE SUBJECT IS NOT
ON THE MINISTERS' AGENDA, THOUGH A YOMIURI SHIMBUN REPORT
QUOTES A TOKYO FONMIN SOURCE TO THE EFFECT THAT, WHILE
THE JAPANESE SIDE IN THE TALKS DOES NOT INTEND TO
PROPOSE A SUMMIT MEETING, THEY WOULD "POSITIVELY CONSIDER"
ANY SUCH KOREAN PROPOSAL.

4. CAUTION ON BOTH SIDES EVIDENTLY STEMS FROM RECOGNITION
OF POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED, PARTICULARLY ON THE
JAPANESE SIDE. JAPANESE EMBOFF CALLED KIM DAE-JUNG
AFFAIR THE MOST SERIOUS OF THESE, SAYING THAT THE
"MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE RESTORED TO ITS ORIGINAL STATE"
BEFORE A MEETING COULD TAKE PLACE. HE INTERPRETED THIS
TO MEAN THAT KIM WOULD HAVE TO BE RELEASED AND HIS
CIVIL RIGHTS RESTORED, AND PERHAPS ALSO THAT HE WOULD
HAVE TO BE FREE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. SAME EMBOFF CITED
AS AN ADDITIONAL OBSTACLE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE
JAPANESE OPPOSITION WOULD EXPLOIT A SUMMIT MEETING TO
FAN POPULAR FEARS OF JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN KOREAN
DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS.

5. WHILE PRESIDENT PARK HAS LITTLE TO CONTEND WITH BY
COMPARISON, THE SUBSTANTIAL AND BY SOME ACCOUNTS GROWING
ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENT IN KOREA HAS FOUND RECENT
EXPRESSION IN DISSIDENT RALLIES AND LITERATURE ACCUSING
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PARK OF SOFTNESS IN DEALING, INTER ALIA, WITH THE TOK-TO/
TAKESHIMA TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. A SUMMIT MEETING WITH
FUKUDA WOULD PROBABLY NOT FUEL PARK'S OPPOSITION, BUT
HIS APPEARING TOO ONE-SIDED OR SUPPLICATORY IN SEEKING
SUCH A MEETING COULD HAVE THAT EFFECT.

6. COMMENT: OUR VIEW IS THAT, ALTHOUGH ANY OF THE
DIFFICULTIES CITED ABOVE IS POTENTIALLY CAPABLE OF
PREVENTING A SUMMIT FROM TAKING PLACE, THE TWO LEADERS'
PUBLICLY-EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE PROJECT ASSURES THAT
BOTH SIDES WILL WORK HARD AT ARRANGING A SUCCESSFUL
MEETING.
GLEYSTEN

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